

DD/A Registry

78-1226

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File Proposed-11-5

22 March 1978

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director of Central Intelligence

FROM: Herbert E. Hetu  
Assistant for Public Affairs

SUBJECT: Proposed Television Series by  
Gordon McLendon

Attached is a Memorandum for the Record concerning Gordon McLendon's visit with the DCI on 3 March, and a copy of the written proposal given to Admiral Turner during that visit. I am also attaching a copy of the exchange of correspondence between the DCI and Mr. Bush on this subject which may be of interest in connection with Mr. Bush's visit tomorrow afternoon.

SEKED

Herbert E. Hetu

Attachments: a/s

cc (w/Memo for Record and Proposal only)

DDO

BDA

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STATINTL

8 March 1978 STATINTL

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

REFERENCE: Memorandum to Admiral Turner from Messrs Gordon McLendon and Fred Weintraub (attached), dated 3 March 1978

Admiral Turner, [REDACTED] and I met on 3 March 1978 with Messrs. McLendon, Weintraub, Mrs. Weintraub, and [REDACTED]. At the meeting, the guests presented their proposal for a television series tentatively entitled, "The CIA." They presented the ref memorandum and, in the discussion, made the points contained in that memorandum.

They strongly reemphasized that they were seeking neither CIA approval nor endorsement of their project, but that they were seeking Agency cooperation to the extent possible.

STATINTL The DCI expressed himself generally in favor of such a project and instructed me to pursue the matter further with the visitors.

[REDACTED] and I continued the discussions with the visitors after the meeting with the DCI. The visitors made the following additional points:

1. They are now thinking in terms of six 2-hour episodes and would probably offer this idea initially to CBS.
2. McLendon and Weintraub noted that they are financially independent and therefore free from potential interference by others.
3. It was proposed that the ~~the~~ beginning and/or end of each episode a message be conveyed saying either that the episode was authenticated by AFIO or that it was reviewed for security clearance by CIA. I said we would want to think about this and discuss it further.
4. Scripts would be offered to the Agency for security review. In case of Agency objections, scripts would be withdrawn or altered without protest.

STATINTL

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5. The Agency's principal contribution, hopefully, would consist of providing information, such as anecdotes, that would be useful in the preparation of episodes for the series.
6. [REDACTED] proposed production of short footage showing the DCI getting into and out of his car at the White House and the Agency, respectively, to be shown at the beginning and end of each episode. My response was negative.

We agreed to meet again at the Agency for a general discussion on 28 March.

[REDACTED]  
Herbert E. Hetu

STATINTL

DATE: 3 March 1978

SUBJECT: Proposed TV Series as Outlined Herein

STATINTL

Mr. McLendon is a member of the Association of Former Intelligence Officers and a former ONI officer. A copy of the Congressional Record, in which his recent speech defending U.S. Intelligence Forces is inserted by Senator Barry Goldwater and also by Senator Jennings Randolph, is in the Admiral's possession.

STATINTL

TL  
"In my opinion, the noise has been so great and the image of CIA has become so tarnished that changes must be made to extinguish, as much as possible, criticism, to restore confidence and to provide an on-going dynamic foreign intelligence service. But no changes will be useful unless the Congress, the press and electronic media, and the public can feel assured that the nation's entire intelligence service, in playing its part to ensure the well-being of our nation, will always confine its operations to acceptable moral and legal standards."

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- (a) Presents the CIA in a positive light, and
- (b) Does not jeopardize national security.

The program would hopefully be one that would, as nearly as possible, resemble a program which the CIA itself might produce were it so inclined. We are aware that the Agency has been approached by numerous other parties looking toward the possibility of a similar series. Whether the Agency gives this particular proposal its cooperation or not, it is worthwhile pointing out that the Agency is now being publicized, in most cases in a questionable light, by such projects as "Three Days of the Condor," "The Company," and others too numerous to mention. We submit that there is no reason why the three individuals submitting this memorandum should not, as patriotic Americans, fight back in defense of the CIA and other U.S. intelligence organizations. In fact, failing CIA's cooperation with this project, the Agency runs the risk that others may simply launch upon a project of similar nature far less desirable to the Agency.

(4) At either the beginning or the end, or both, of the proposed series the following wordage is at this moment contemplated:

- (a) "This episode is based in fact on the experiences of a U.S. Intelligence Officer, and has been authenticated by the Association of Former Intelligence Officers (AFIO)."
- (b) "Because these stories are in part based on the experiences of U.S. Intelligence Personnel, and it is the desire of the producers not to endanger the lives of working intelligence officers, this script has been reviewed for national security clearance by the Central Intelligence Agency."

(5) The proposed name of the series is "The CIA." Alternative titles are available but suffer by comparison.

(6) A verbal presentation of sample plots is being made to the Admiral (and Mr. Hetu) simultaneously with delivery of this memorandum.